

JANUARY 30, 2015

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater Continues To Inspire

Legacy Exclusive

When awarding a posthumous Presidential Medal of Freedom to choreographer Alvin Ailey, President Barack Obama said, "Through him, African American history was told in a way that it had never been before — with passionate, virtuoso dance performances that transfixed audiences worldwide."

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater continues to inspire audiences presenting classic pieces of their repertoire alongside works by today's most exciting choreographers. The company is returning to South Florida for an artistic residency at the Broward Center for the Performing Arts generously supported by Funding Arts Broward, Inc. and by a grant from South Arts in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture.

Company member Jamar Roberts began dancing at the age of six in Miami and trained at Dance Empire of Miami before joining Alvin Ailey in 2002. While he was a student at New World School of the Arts, a dance teacher took him to see the company for the first time.

"It was amazing," Roberts recalls. "I saw Revelations and I thought it was absolutely beautiful. I remember 'Sinner Man' [a section of the larger ballet] was really powerful and different with these three guys emanat-

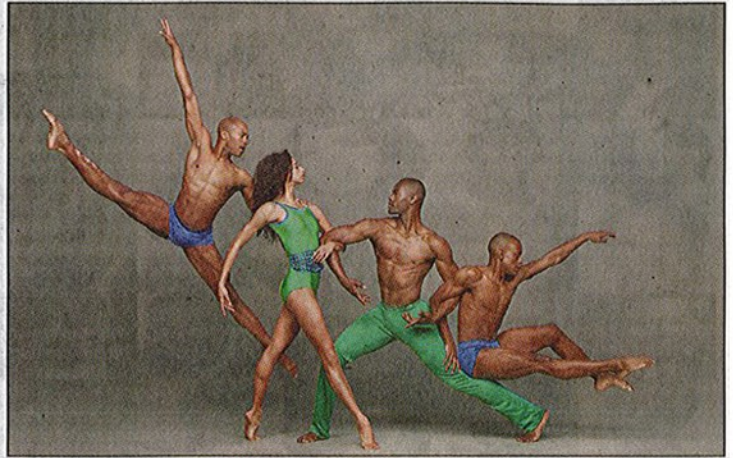
ing so much heart."

Alvin Ailey's signature work Revelations celebrates African-American culture using gospel and blues and will be one of the works performed for students at the Broward Center.

"Kids are so responsive to dance," marvels Roberts. "From the stage, the lights are up a little bit and you can see their faces. You have to wake up a little bit earlier to perform for students, but when you get a really cool crowd of kids and feel their eagerness and excitement, it's like morning coffee."

One of the dancers who made an impression on Roberts when he was a student seeing Revelations for the first time was Matthew Rushing, who serves as the company's rehearsal director and guest artist. Rushing choreographed this season's world premiere ODETTA, based on the music of African American folk singer Odetta Holmes. The acclaimed new work, which will be performed at the Broward Center, brings her music that has been called "the soundtrack of the Civil Rights movement" to a new generation.

"This piece has so much heart," says Roberts who does not dance in the piece. "Heart is also the number one word I would use to describe her music. The piece is really, really uplifting and relevant." In addition to the student performances and a public master class, the company will



perform three programs of works featuring Revelations, ODETTA, After the Rain (pas de deux), Awassa Astrige/Ostrich, Bad Blood, D-Man in the Waters (Part 1), LIFT, Polish Pieces and Suspended Women.

When asked how he would describe the company, Roberts says, "Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater is monumental. It's like when you go to New York, you have to see the Statue of Liberty. It is one of those things you

have to see. It has its own place in African American and American culture."

Alvin Ailey performs February 19 – 22 with a master class presented on February 21 at the Broward Center for the Performing Arts at 201 SW Fifth Avenue in Fort Lauderdale. Buy tickets online at BrowardCenter.org or Ticketmaster.com or by phone at (954) 462-0222.releases.

AN INDEPENDENT SUPPLEMENT BY B&B MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS GROUP TO THE SUN SENTINEL | FRIDAY, JANUARY 30, 2015

Legacy

South Florida

BLACK HISTORY MONTH ISSUE

Black History Month Honorees:
 The South Florida Alumni Drum Majors of Florida A&M University and Bethune Cookman

Bishop Henry Fernandez, and Fort Lauderdale Police Chief Frank Adderly

Motown The Musical and Alvin Ailey to Perform at Broward Center

The Race for Mayor of Miramar Heats Up

And More...